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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/WE, NEA/I, EUR/RPM

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [SP](#)

SUBJECT: SPANISH CONSIDER SUPPORT FOR NATO TRAINING MISSION
- IRAQ

REF: A. (A) STATE 16188

[B.](#) (B) MADRID 170

[C.](#) (C) MADRID 169

[D.](#) (D) 2008 MADRID 988

Classified By: Acting DCM William Duncan for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[11.](#) (C) After the February 24 meeting between Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Moratinos, reftel (a) demarche was conveyed to MFA Deputy Director General for the Middle East Alberto Ucelay. In response to our offer of assistance as Spain considered contributing Guardia Civil trainers to NTM-I, Ucelay reiterated Moratinos' previous remark that the issue would have to be considered by President Zapatero.

[12.](#) (C) Ucelay has advised that while Spain may be able to send Guardia Civil to Iraq, there is a political cost for the Zapatero government. It will still be difficult to "sell" the public on the idea of putting either Spanish police or civil servants in Iraq. The PSOE-led socialist government must take care not to undermine its justification for its 2004 withdrawal based on an argument that the UN authorities were not legal grounds for invading Iraq. At the same time, Spain acknowledges that with increased Iraqi sovereignty and independence, now is the time for some type of renewed Spanish presence -- as evidenced by Deputy FM Lossada's November 27, 2008 trip to Baghdad. Lossada's Iraq visit launched Spain's intensified presence and "the start of a new era as the Iraqi Government takes on its full responsibilities and with a clear view to the withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq," according to a MFA press release. The MFA also stressed that, as Lossada made clear during the May 2008 International Compact Conference in Stockholm, Spain will continue to support the reconstruction process in Iraq.

[13.](#) (U) Spain makes great effort to emphasize that apart from the 2004 troop withdrawal, it has maintained active support for Iraq and kept an Embassy open in Baghdad, despite difficult security issues, from 2004-2008. Spain fulfilled its financial commitments and also cancelled a substantial portion of Iraqi debt. The Spanish AID-equivalent, AECID, funded rule-of-law and human rights promotion activities within the EUJUST LEX European mission. AECID also provided aid for Iraqi refugees in neighboring countries.

[14.](#) (C) As the issue was first broached with the Spanish on September 11, 2008 by visiting Ambassador Satterfield to Deputy FM Lossada, the MFA had several months to ponder the request. During follow-up meetings with FM Moratinos and Presidency SecGen Leon on February 11 and 12 (see reftels), both officials indicated that, while the request was under consideration, Zapatero would make a final determination.

CHACON